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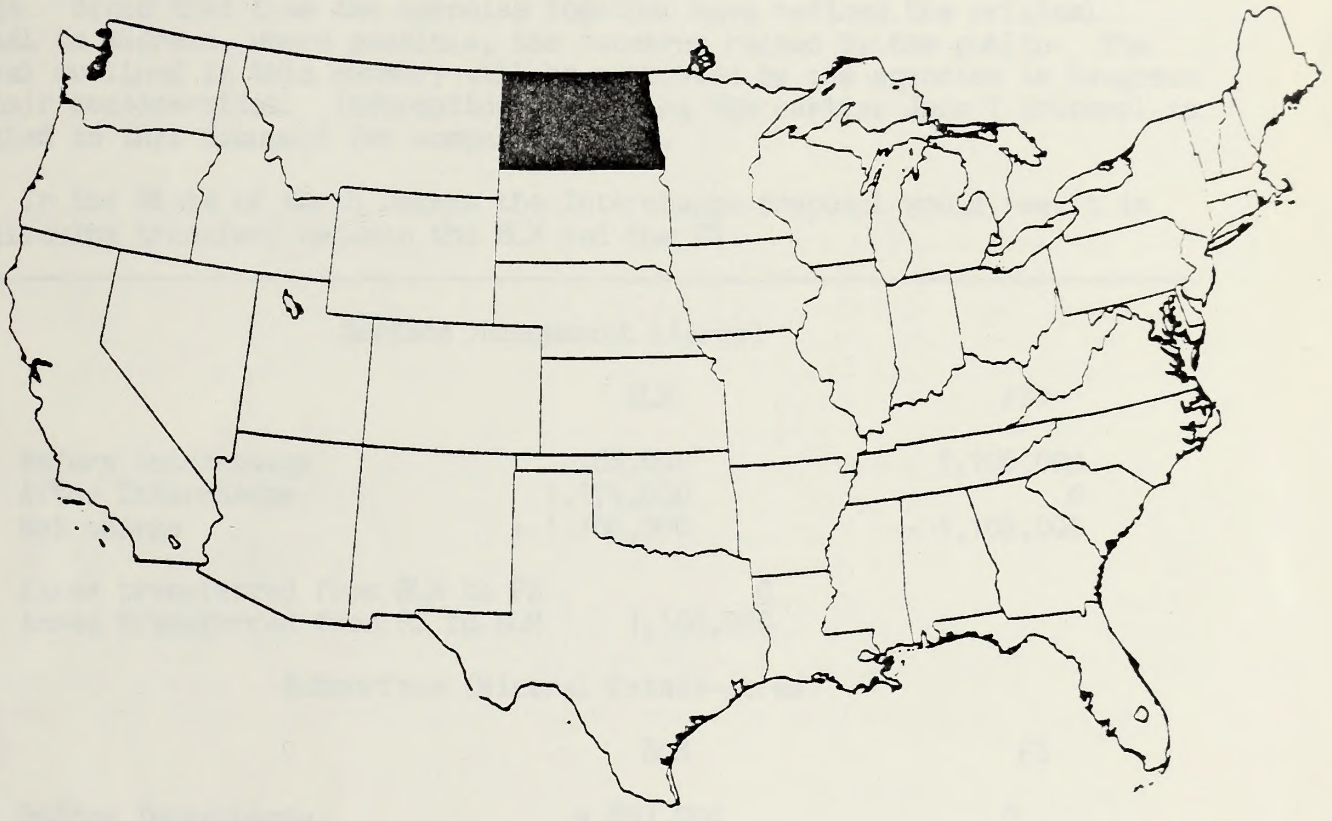
BLM/FS INTERCHANGE
Summary

NORTH DAKOTA



PREPARED BY:

Rocky Mountain Region
Northern Region
FOREST SERVICE

Montana State Office
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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INTERCHANGE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

I. OVERVIEW

The following summarizes the proposed Interchange for the State of North Dakota. This summary includes a review of the public involvement, the proposed action, the anticipated costs and savings, and the actions identified during the study that can be taken independently of the Interchange. More detailed information is available for review in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) State Office in Billings, MT, or the Forest Service (FS) Regional Office in Missoula, MT.

State summaries were first published as part of the June 7 Interchange package. Since that time the agencies together have refined the original proposal to address, where possible, the concerns raised by the public. The proposal outlined in this summary will be submitted by the agencies to Congress for their consideration. Information concerning the earlier June 7 proposal is presented in this document for comparison only.

In the State of North Dakota the Interchange proposal would result in the following transfers between the BLM and the FS:

Surface Management (Acres)

	BLM	FS
Before Interchange	68,000	1,106,000
After Interchange	1,174,000	0
Net change	+ 1,106,000	- 1,106,000

Acres transferred from BLM to FS	0
Acres Transferred from FS to BLM	1,106,000

Subsurface (Mineral Estate-Acres)

	BLM	FS
Before Interchange	4,893,000	0
After Interchange	4,893,000	0

All present FS management responsibility in North Dakota would transfer to the BLM. All communities that currently house a FS office would have a BLM office. Public lands in North Dakota would continue to fall under the jurisdiction of the BLM State Office in Billings, MT.

Savings would result from 1) merging FS offices into BLM offices located in the same communities, 2) restructuring boundaries to achieve optimum size and balance between subunits, and 3) eliminating duplicate positions. Some additional full-time positions would be established so that management work now being done in the Custer Forest Supervisor's Office and BLM Office in Billings could be shifted to ND.

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Service to the public would be maintained by retaining a BLM District Office in Dickinson. In response to public concern over access to land and minerals status records in North Dakota, the BLM would continue to provide minerals expertise and record services in both Dickinson, ND, and Billings, MT.

II. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement has been an integral part of refining the original Interchange proposal. BLM and FS representatives met with the general public, State and local government officials, news media, special interest groups, organizations, and FS and BLM employees in North Dakota. They conducted numerous one-on-one contacts and briefings, and responded to letters and telephone inquiries. Twenty-six responses to the Interchange proposal originated in North Dakota during the formal public review, from June 7 to July 8.

Most respondents supported the stated goals of enhanced public service, improved management efficiency, reduced agency costs, and quality resource management. Most also objected to specific elements of the June 7 proposal, and indicated their satisfaction with the current system and concern about whether the Interchange goals would be achieved by the proposed changes. Several respondents indicated that it made more sense to transfer the small portion of BLM lands to the FS.

The public concerns for the Interchange proposal in North Dakota need to be considered in light of the Interchange proposal in Montana. Under the Montana proposal, the FS land in eastern Montana would transfer to the BLM, thereby separating North Dakota from other areas under FS managment. Leaving the National Forest System lands in North Dakota under FS jurisdiction after the change in Montana would not improve efficiency. For this reason the original Interchange proposal was not revised.

III. PROPOSED ACTION

A. Communities Affected

Dickinson is the only community where both the BLM and the FS currently maintain offices. Two other towns have FS offices that would be replaced by BLM offices. Following is a description of the changes in the three affected communities.

Dickinson--The existing BLM District Office would remain. The FS Medora Ranger District Office would become the BLM Medora Resource Area Office, reporting to the Dickinson District Office. A net increase of 21 permanent positions would occur in Dickinson as a result of a shift of functions from Billings, MT. The economic impact on the community from this increase would be beneficial.

Watford City--The existing FS McKenzie Ranger District Office would become the BLM McKenzie Resource Area Office. Staffing would increase by eight permanent positions, primarily minerals-related, bringing a slight economic benefit to the community.

Lisbon--The existing FS Sheyenne Ranger District Office would become the BLM Sheyenne Resource Area Office. Staffing levels would not change.

B. Office and Staffing Changes

There are currently 38 FS and 31 BLM permanent positions in the State. After the Interchange is fully implemented, there would be 98 BLM and no FS positions. The Interchange would result in a net personnel increase of 29 positions due to the transfer of work now being performed by BLM and FS personnel stationed in Billings, MT. These 29 positions would be filled by agency employees from outside North Dakota.

Community	Existing Office	Proposed Changes June 7	Proposed Changes Revised	Net Staff Change June 7	Net Staff Change Revised
Dickinson	BLM DO FS RD	BLM DO BLM RA	BLM DO BLM RA	+21	+21
Watford City	FS RD	BLM RA	BLM RA	+ 8	+ 8
Lisbon	FS RD	BLM RA	BLM RA	0	0
			Net change:	+29	+29

Note: FS RD = Ranger District, BLM DO = District Office, RA = Resource Area, NC = No change.

C. Lands and Minerals

The public room and lands and minerals status records would continue to be maintained at the BLM State Office in Billings, MT. Minerals adjudication functions would also continue to be done at the Billings BLM State Office. Case work, case files, and copies of records would be maintained at local BLM offices.

D. Public Service

The Interchange proposal provides for improved public service in minerals management by placing surface and mineral estate management in the same agency. One stop service would be achieved in processing minerals and other permits. Dual permits held by public land users would no longer be necessary.

Consolidation of jurisdiction throughout the State would increase efficiency and save the taxpayer money. The consolidation would also enhance the protection and management of archaeological resources.

IV ANTICIPATED COSTS AND SAVINGS

A. Five-Year Implementation Costs

Personnel costs	$ 453,000
Space costs	0
Other costs	0
Total costs	$ 453,000

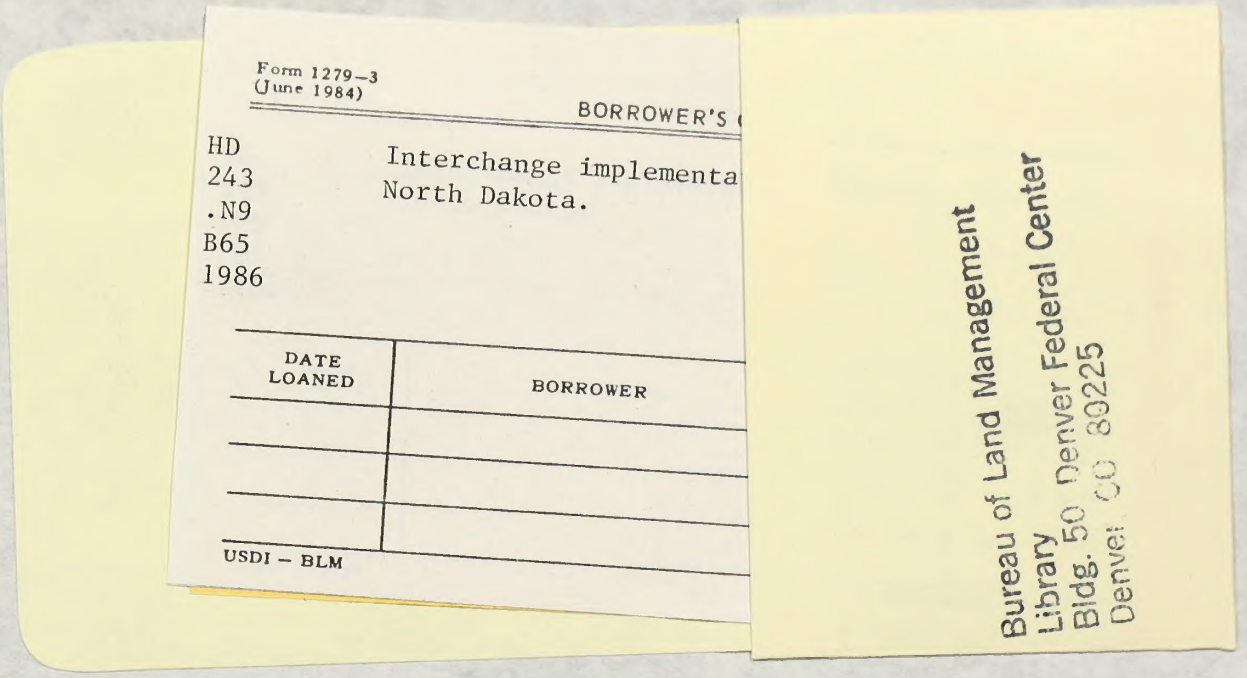
B. Savings the First 5-Years

Personnel savings	$ 112,000
Space savings	646,000
Other savings	0
Total 5-Year Savings	$ 758,000

C. Average Annual Savings after Implementation--$ 203,000

V. ACTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INDEPENDENTLY OF INTERCHANGE

The FS and the BLM are continuously looking for and taking advantage of opportunities to reduce costs and improve effectiveness. Arrangements are currently being made for the BLM and FS to share warehouse and vehicle storage space in Dickinson. An effort will be made to co-locate the FS and the BLM offices in Dickinson. The result would be lower annual rent, one-stop service for the public and opportunities to share common workloads such as answering the telephone and receiving visitors. Prior to legislation enabling the agencies to interchange jurisdictions, no actions will be taken unless they would have occurred in the absence of the Interchange and implementation of the Interchange would not cause the action to be reversed.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IV ANTICIPATED COSTS AND SAVINGS

A. Five-Year Implementation Costs

Personnel costs	$ 483,000
Space costs	0
Other costs	0
Total costs	$ 483,000

B. Savings the First 5-Years

Personnel savings	$ 112,000
Space savings	646,000
Other savings	0
Total 5-Year Savings	$ 758,000

C. Average Annual Savings after Implementation--$ 203,000